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ABSTRACT

This manual introduces the topic of family literacy programs in libraries and provides guidelines for libraries that are just getting started in family literacy programs as well as libraries that are further developing their existing programs. It is argued that illiteracy tends to be both intergenerational and cyclic, i.e., if a child's parents are illiterate, then it is more than likely that the child will also be educationally disadvantaged. For this reason, the program focuses its efforts upon family-oriented literacy programs. This manual covers five major topics: (1) the need for family literacy programs and literacy efforts in public libraries; (2) service models, including a continuum of involvement; (3) family literacy activities, which include children's literature and parenting skills services; (4) planning, funding, determining objectives and strategies for, and evaluating family literacy programs; and (5) issues related to family literacy programs such as the recruitment and retention of program participants. A 23-item bibliography and a list of 14 references useful in building a home library are appended. (MAB)

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Family Literacy Library Programs

MODELS OF SERVICE

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Family Literacy Library Programs:
Models of Service

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State Library of Iowa
Des Moines, Iowa

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Preface

The purpose of this manual is to introduce the topic of family literacy programs in libraries. It should provide guidelines for a library just getting started in family literacy as well as aid libraries in further development of their existing programs. Although targeted to libraries, the approaches and activities are drawn from a variety of settings. As a result, other agencies and organizations will find useful suggestions for their family literacy efforts.

There is not just one way to provide family literacy services in libraries. Rather, a library needs to design a program based on its own community needs. This book tries to offer a wide range of service options to allow for each library to customize a family literacy program.

The information in this manual comes from a review of the literature, telephone interviews with libraries, and case studies of library family literacy programs. We would like to thank all the libraries we talked with and, in particular, those libraries we visited for this project. These libraries included:

Davenport Public Library, Iowa
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St. Paul Public Library, Minnesota
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M. Leslie Edmonds

1

Family Literacy

Growing interest in preventing illiteracy has led to acknowledging two of its characteristics -- it is intergenerational and cyclical. If parents have difficulty reading, it is more likely that the children will be educationally disadvantaged as well. The efforts to break this illiteracy cycle are being called "family literacy." The purpose of family literacy programs is to help break this cycle of under-education by improving childcare skills (especially those relating to reading) and uniting parents and children in positive educational experiences. The positive outcome of such efforts is literacy, which also can be intergenerational and cyclical.

A Definition

At the simplest level, any efforts that promote family support for reading and reading-related behaviors could be called family literacy programs. This would include general library programs such as preschool story times or summer reading programs where two generations are involved. This basic level can include an active program of recruitment and planning for involvement of adults with reading problems. It is this involvement that distinguishes family literacy from the basic family and children's programs often available from libraries. Family literacy programs, as defined for this manual, are intended for under-educated parents and other adult caregivers. Although not restricted by definition to families with children five years old and younger, most family literacy programs to date have focused on reaching families before the children enter school.

The focus of family literacy programs is on the family, not just the adult or just the child. The term "family," as used here, includes any significant adult who works with or cares for children. It may be any relative or adult who spends a great deal of time with the children. The term "at-risk" families is used, especially in schools, to define the group in need of family

services. This group might include families of low socio-economic status, those with abuse problems, transitory populations, and those families with children who are below the skill levels needed to be successful in school.

Absences of skills, money, time, or self-esteem conspire to create an atmosphere where reading does not flourish. Families that are economically deprived deal with absences of these types as do teenage parents who may have little time in their lives for books. A report produced by the Kenan Family Trust program noted that for every 100 children born, 13 are born to teenage mothers; 15 will be born to households where no parent is employed; and 25 will depend on welfare for at least a portion of their childhood (Kenan, 1988). These factors work against reading as the more basic need for survival takes immediate priority. Literacy programs tend to serve those who have some of these characteristics; however, each case is an individual one and family literacy programs need to be open to anyone who desires additional help in creating a "reading family."

The primary intent of a family literacy project is not necessarily to teach children to read, but rather to model reading behavior. The concept of "modeling" underlies the practical design of a family literacy program. Parents, adult caregivers, and librarians can provide examples of reading behavior for children to emulate. This includes using reading in daily situations such as cooking or shopping, reading for leisure, seeking information when making decisions, and providing print materials for the family. Reading-related behavior also encompasses discussing ideas with children, engaging in crafts, encouraging children to practice skills, and planning family activities. These are some ideas for modeling reading behavior; there is no one approach to achieve this goal.

An important outcome of family literacy programs is recognition by parents and other adult caregivers of the value of modeling reading behavior. Setting a pattern of reading-related behavior is instrumental to young children as they begin to develop lifelong skills. Reading is the ideal presented; modeling reading-related behaviors says this ideal is worthy of imitation.

In the process of understanding how to model reading behavior, adults are aided in their skill development as they learn about working with their children. The adult learns as well as the child in family literacy efforts. This more holistic approach emphasizes family strengths rather than deficits and builds on natural family relationships. As such, family literacy programs stress the development of literacy as part of family learning and maintenance. Family maintenance encompasses strengthening of the family as a cohesive unit and the nurturing of family relationships. In the library, the family has the opportunity to engage in family reading activities. Continuity between the family-in-library and family-in-home situations is critical to these literacy efforts. Patterns of reading behavior need to be transmitted from an institutional setting to the home, where learning continues between adults and children.

There are many settings for family literacy programs in the United States. A review of the literature, telephone and personal interviews, and case studies have shown family literacy efforts in Adult Basic Education/GED programs, libraries, schools, public health departments, Headstart, workplace literacy programs, volunteer literacy services, and teen parenting programs. While each setting provides different opportunities and constraints, for the most part family literacy efforts are not unique or specific to a type of setting. Wherever they occur, programs can be customized to meet the needs of the potential clients for family literacy services. This manual concentrates on literacy programs in public libraries, but the program suggestions and planning guidelines cross types of institutions.

Why Are Family Literacy Programs Needed?

Illiteracy as a problem is well documented in the news media and by researchers. Figures on the problem vary, but the most often cited figure is that one in five adult Americans cannot read, write, or compute at a level necessary to function in today's society. Others define literacy in terms of reading levels or grades in school completed. No matter what figure is used, illiteracy is a problem of national scope that operates to disenfranchise a large portion of the adult citizenry across the United States. The

problem is large enough that it has moved from being just the concern of educators to include legislators, business people, and other interested citizens.

Family literacy programs are an attempt to help improve the reading skills of adults. But more important, these efforts are targeted at prevention of illiteracy. As noted earlier, illiteracy, or being educationally disadvantaged, is cyclical, frequently passed on from one generation to another. Family literacy programs, by combining attention to the adult and the child, have as their primary goal prevention along with remediation. Public libraries have a long history of helping those who desire further education. In its role as the "people's university," the public library has as its mission to create lifelong learners. Programs that help prevent illiteracy contribute to eradication of the problem, rather than trying to fix it later. From a purely economic point of view, it is cheaper to prevent than to cure illiteracy.

Research has shown the importance of the preschool years on educational success. Before becoming readers, young children must learn why people read and what people do when they read; this is referred to as "reading readiness." There is increasing recognition of the influential role of parents and other adults as role models for reading. Parents help toddlers learn to love books. They can set the patterns for learning by immersing their children in a verbal atmosphere of conversation, not just directions, as well as demonstrating reading and reading-related behaviors in the home. Family literacy programs that help parents learn to read children's materials, to tell stories, to encourage children to use books, and to bring more reading material in the home, enhance a parent's role as the first teacher and as a role model for preschool children.

Surrounding children from infancy by a world of books and print is something that reading families take for granted. In looking around the home, there are several indicators of this world of reading, starting with, of course, books, newspapers, and magazines. If there are children's books, are they easily accessible to children or put out of reach? Are the books appropriate for the age of the children? Other indicators are calendars, message pads and pencils near the telephone, writing

implements for children, and printed notes on the refrigerator. This "surrounding" of children with a print world does not happen instinctively if the adults in the household do not read or use print regularly in their life.

This modeling of reading behavior is critical, as a significant amount of a child's intellectual development occurs by the time they enter school. This intellectual development includes the development of speaking vocabulary, ability to reason, and the ability to remember facts. The young child, in effect, develops a pattern of learning that will last a lifetime. In addition, ethical and moral patterns become set during the same period. For children, learning takes place through the senses, using their entire body as a learning tool. Family literacy programs that encourage parents to read to children; to interact with children in discussing books, stories, and things they see; and to model reading behaviors in the home help in setting a reading pattern in these critical preschool years.

For parents, family literacy programs support parent and child relationships that emphasize effective communication. This in turn contributes to the child's self-concept. Children with good self-esteem will learn more easily than those with a low self-image. Parents in at risk families need to interact with other parents to help understand their child's development as well as understand their relationship with the schools. Family literacy programs tend to create a parent support group while at the same time helping parents to be more active consumers of their children's education. Research has shown that parental involvement in their child's schooling contributes to school success (U.S. Department of Education, 1986).

For the adult new reader, family literacy programs build on one of the key motivators for adults learning to read -- to help their children. The family literacy efforts help to increase the parent's skills while at the same time fostering reading-related behavior for the whole family. The focus, however, is away from the parent's difficulties with reading; instead, attention is paid to the positive strategies of working with young children. The programs give a parent's learning a second chance.

Literacy Efforts in Public Libraries

Family literacy efforts in public libraries stem from a strong tradition in children's services, adult services, and outreach programs. This division of services along levels of human development is a distinctive characteristic of the library as an institution. To illustrate how these traditional divisions blend together to create family literacy services, a brief review of literacy efforts within these service units follows.

Children's Services

By definition, children's services in public libraries aid children to read. The role of children's services, however, has not been to teach traditional reading skills, but rather to promote literacy among children and families. The focus of children's services has been on the child, teaching a sense of story, how to use the book, and a sense of narrative.

Libraries have concentrated on the motivations for reading and how reading really works for people, while at the same time introducing children to a broad base of literature in a non-threatening atmosphere. The public library offers more individualized alternatives for reading and tends to be non-judgmental about the child's choices. Overall, children's librarians contribute their understanding of the value of books for a child's development along with a knowledge of children's collections. Their role in literacy has been to match the child with the right materials, to make reading attractive, to develop programming, and to promote a good attitude toward reading.

While the concentration of effort is on the child, children's librarians have worked with parents primarily on an individualized basis. This service occurs on a drop-in basis, and library staff assist parents one-on-one. There has been a growth of family programming in libraries, and toddler programs tend to assume the presence of a parent or adult caregiver. In public library youth services, more outreach efforts are being made to caregivers in general, that is, adults who live and work with children. These outreach services include special programs and

deposit collections. The extension of service to adults is part of the attempt by children's librarians to make families comfortable with the library as an institution.

Overall, children's librarians bring to family literacy efforts a strong tradition of child-centered services and a willingness to work with parents. They also bring key skills to the design of family literacy programs -- knowledge of children's publishing and materials for parents combined with a model of service that is highly interactive and individualized. In addition, the youth services department may have a good communication channel with schools, child care providers, and other professionals working with children. These skills are critical to the planning of family literacy services.

Adult and Outreach Services

Adult literacy efforts in public libraries usually are related to adult and/or outreach services. Just as children's services have a long tradition in public libraries, so does attention to the adult new reader, starting with services to an immigrant population in larger cities to individualized self-directed learning projects in libraries of all sizes. A growth of interest in adult literacy efforts started in the 1960s; by the 1980s, there was widespread interest in being involved in adult literacy efforts among public libraries of all sizes.

There are two general purposes of adult literacy efforts for public libraries: 1) to teach adults to read or improve their skills and 2) to support the efforts of other literacy providers in the area. Some libraries choose only the support role, while others combine the two roles to serve their communities' needs for literacy services.

Libraries of all sizes engage in teaching adults to read, usually by coordinating a volunteer tutoring effort that emphasizes one-on-one teaching. This effort includes recruitment and training of tutors, recruitment and placement of students, and evaluation of student progress. Some of these activities are done in cooperation with other literacy agencies in the community. While not the most frequently offered literacy service in public

libraries, direct instruction is chosen by libraries in a variety of settings, from a one-person rural library to an urban library that commands extensive resources.

The second group of activities -- those in support of local literacy efforts -- covers an array of literacy activities. In general, these are activities designed to aid the local literacy efforts of, for example, the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program or volunteer literacy council affiliated with Laubach or Literacy Volunteers of America. Support for these programs involves literacy collection development, including print and audiovisual materials as well as computer software. These collections are housed at the library and/or in other literacy services locations. Public libraries also offer reference service that provides referral to other direct-instruction literacy providers in the area. Related to this, the library also is a source of information on the literacy problem. Other common methods of support for other literacy programs are: providing space for tutoring or classes; offering tours and orientations for students, tutors, and ABE instructors; and advocating for literacy by providing and participating in publicity efforts about the problem and local literacy services. The library may also participate or coordinate local literacy efforts via a literacy coalition.

Libraries involved in adult literacy, through adult services and/or outreach, bring to family literacy efforts an understanding of the adult new reader. Because family literacy programs start with the parent or caregiver, a knowledge of the needs, desires, and difficulties of an adult new reader is critical. Along with this, either in the direct instruction or support services role, the library will have established contact with local literacy providers and those in support of literacy efforts. This "network" is essential in planning family literacy efforts. The expertise in collection development in adult literacy materials will be needed in conjunction with the knowledge of children's materials. Beyond adult literacy services, those working in adult services and outreach bring to the family literacy effort awareness of local services and community needs and are skilled in developing programming and services for adults in general and for those with special needs.

It is this blend of children's, outreach, and adult services knowledge and expertise that is required to plan family literacy programs in libraries. Since the focus of these efforts is families, programs cannot be totally centered on either children or adults; rather, its focus is children and adults *together*. By combining ideas and efforts that cross generations, library staff can help assure that a program addresses the needs of the entire family, bringing a more holistic view to this form of literacy programs in libraries.

Summary

For public libraries, family literacy efforts bring together three valuable functions in the library -- children's services, adult services, and outreach. Family literacy programs are a logical extension of these three roles. A library that is responsive to and reflective of its community needs to design programs that address community conditions. Libraries, in cooperation with other agencies, help to create a community of readers by supporting and developing family literacy services.

In summary, the goals of family literacy programs are:

To help parents and other adult caregivers understand the importance of modeling reading-related behaviors and reading with children.

To improve the reading skills of parents and other adult caregivers.

To enhance reading-readiness skills of preschool children.

To help parents understand their role as advocates for their child's learning and to act on that understanding.

To improve the self-esteem in both the adult and child.

To increase parenting skills, especially those related to reading.

> To develop reading in families, where adults create a loving relationship between their children and books.

In light of these goals, this manual offers an array of approaches to help libraries plan and carry out family literacy programs. Chapter Two provides service models that illustrate library responses to these service goals.

2

Models of Service

Just as communities and their libraries vary, so do family literacy programs. The type of program developed depends on community needs, extent of resources, and expertise available. This chapter describes three basic family literacy service models and proposes a "continuum of involvement" for libraries developing family literacy programs.

Service Models

Based on study of actual family literacy programs and on a review of available literature, library family literacy efforts seem to fall within three basic service models: adaptive, cooperative, and sponsorship. The distinctions between these roles lie not so much in the activities for each but in the level of administration and responsibility assumed by the library for family literacy efforts. The answers to questions about who controls the project, the level of funding and resources, and who initiates the project suggest one of the three service roles. Customized service varies among the three roles as does the degree of independence of the library project. These three models are not used so much to label a given library's efforts; rather, they are an attempt to conceptualize the ways in which a library might respond to the community's need for family literacy services.

Adaptive Model of Service

In this service model, a library basically re-evaluates current library services and then adapts them to serve low-literate adults and their families. The key question here is "How can we facilitate access to library services for the targeted group?" For the most part this suggests not necessarily offering new services, but emphasizing or building on existing services with a special effort to inform the target audience about the library's services. This model implies a needs assessment phase, where the library determines the community resources currently available in

literacy and family services. The library initiates this effort, which does not usually involve a high level of cooperative effort with other community groups beyond gathering information about their resources and services.

A primary focus of this adaptive model is collections. Library staff members review existing collections (both juvenile and adult) for materials that are effective for family reading with an adult new reader and for parenting materials in all formats. The library may pull these from the current collection or purchase additional titles for special displays, a separate collection, or to create bibliographies. In this model, the library also offers tours and orientations, space for tutoring, and referral to literacy and family services in the community. Families are encouraged to attend current programs for children and families. Services in this model are more supportive than customized, although targeted publicity of these adapted library services is needed to reach the desired audience. It is the hardest to evaluate the impact of the adaptive role, as its services are the least direct. Libraries, however, often find the activities under this model to be essential steps that lead to more complex family literacy activities.

Cooperative Model of Service

Libraries following the cooperative model work more closely with other agencies and organizations to plan and carry out family literacy activities. In this role, the critical questions are: "How can the library and this cooperating agency best serve families in need of literacy services?" and "What services can we offer cooperatively to serve the needs of the targeted group?" Co-sponsorship is the key feature of this service role, in which customized library activities support the literacy efforts of other agencies. The library may initiate these efforts or respond to inquiries for assistance from other community agencies and organizations.

Activities in this role vary greatly (see Chapter Three on activities) and include, for example, teaching the use of the library as part of another agency's program, developing special family programs, or teaching parents how to use children's

materials. In contrast to the adaptive role, library staff will be doing more one-on-one or group teaching, although clients are likely to attend these programs or use services in conjunction with their involvement with another agency. Because of the strong involvement of the cooperating agency, some of these services may be offered off-site. Library staff may also conduct training sessions to teach staff from other agencies and organizations how to use the library, children's literature, and parenting information to promote family involvement in learning and reading. Joint publicity is an aspect of this service role, but may be specific to a particular co-sponsor.

Under this model, the cooperating agency tends to hold the most control of evaluation, since it is their clients and their structured programs accessing library services. Collaborative evaluation of clients as well as evaluation of the cooperation itself are two facets of evaluation in this role. For libraries seeking a more direct and customized involvement in family literacy, this model allows them to work with other agencies and organizations. This brings to the library's family literacy efforts more resources, additional expertise, and most important, an entree to the clients of these cooperating agencies. Both the library and cooperating groups share responsibility for the family literacy project.

Sponsorship Model of Service

Libraries in the sponsorship model develop specialized library family literacy programs that are relatively independent in terms of funding, staffing, and delivery. While the library directs and controls these efforts, it continues to work with other groups in planning such programs. The key question here is "How can the library use its resources to increase community offerings for low-literate adults and families?" The library is the initiator in this role, working with and contacting other groups they have identified in the community.

Activities under the sponsorship model include program series for families, new and expanded collections, interactive learning stations or programs for parents, and delivery of library programs off-site. In this role, the library may hire outside

Figure 2.1

Continuum of Involvement in Family Literacy

Levels	**1**	**2**	**3**
Collections	Basic print collection concentrating on infant to five age group; cull from current collection	Collecting parenting information; expand basic print collection	Expanding with new formats, e.g., learning toys, audio-cassette and book sets, videos for children and on parenting
Materials Produced	Devise bib-liographies on parenting and books for certain age groups	Create story telling aids, e.g., flannel board stories, puppets	Develop handouts on expectations for children, esp. on reading and reading-related behaviors
Programs	Story hours involving high level interaction between parent and child	Design parenting programs on selected topics or themes	Parenting programs simultaneous with children's programs; bring together for joint activity at close of program
Individualized Services	Assist parent or caregiver in individual selection of materials	Changing display of a learning activity for family use in the library	Information on community resources for families and literacy; possible printed guide
Recruitment/ Promotion	Use of traditional media sources within service area	Meet with cooperating agencies to discuss the program	Distribute information to targeted audience via cooperating agencies

Figure 2.1 (continued)

Continuum of Involvement in Family Literacy

4	5	6
Assist other agencies in selection of materials for their own programs	Provide collections to other program sites in the community	Create multi-media kits on selected themes for use by families
Suggested activities with children by age or developmental stage	Developing learning activities and crafts for use by families	Preparing videos on parenting and reading techniques; may be original or taped from library program
Series of parent/child workshops; agencies may collaborate	Program or series offered at other sites in community	Library staff train other agency staff to conduct own family literacy programs
Creation of a drop-in learning center with several activities	Working with parent on how to use reading materials with children	Customizing of family learning or reading plans; may focus on child or parent
Library recruits from existing literacy programs	Special recruitment event or activity, e.g., welcome baby kits	Direct personal appeal to targeted group by attending meetings or door-to-door recruitment

experts to assist in program development, as well as tap expertise within the library. Marketing these services is the primary responsibility of the library. The library takes a leadership role in community family literacy efforts and may create or encourage a coalition for family literacy.

Customized and individualized services are a key feature of this role, along with the library being primarily responsible for direction and evaluation. Because of the level of control by the library in the sponsorship role, the library has the greatest ability to collect evaluation information from participants in the program. These projects are the most likely to have a unique, identified name for the family literacy program and often require a larger commitment from the library in terms of time and resources.

This section describes three service models that can be used to explain library involvement in family literacy. In the adaptive model, the library examines its existing services and collections to consider how these might be used by low-literate adults and their families. The cooperative model has as its primary characteristic collaborative family literacy services that blend the resources of the library and other community agencies. The library is the most proactive in the sponsorship model, as staff design programs to enhance local offerings in family literacy. Within each of these service roles, a variety of activities are offered. The continuum of involvement presented in the next section provides a categorization of these activities.

Continuum of Involvement

As described in the previous section, a specific activity is not necessarily unique to a given service model, although the level of control over design and administration of that activity does reflect the service role of a given library. Instead, specific activities can be grouped into five categories: collections, materials produced, programs, individualized services, and recruitment/promotion. The activities become more complex in terms of time, funding, expertise needed, and level of cooperation along the continuum. A library may choose from any level of the

continuum and does not necessarily have to carry out the preceding activities in order to accomplish activities higher in the continuum. Figure 2.1 illustrates this continuum.

Collections

In family literacy efforts, libraries bring an important contribution -- their knowledge of collection development. In collaborative family literacy efforts, it is usually the library staff that is called upon to contribute this critical expertise. As one way to view involvement in family literacy efforts, examine the collections section of the continuum in Figure 2.1. This illustrates the range of collection-related activities, from examining existing library collections for appropriate materials to the actual development of customized family literacy kits that combine several formats of materials on a certain theme into one convenient package.

Materials Produced

In order to customize materials for the family literacy program and promote services and materials, libraries can create a wide array of items. These materials are used in conjunction with special family programs, offered within the library, and, in some cases, distributed to interested groups in the community. As suggested by the continuum, these materials range from the more familiar bibliographies of parenting titles and children's materials to production of videos on parenting and/or reading techniques with children.

Programs

Much of the effort in family literacy centers around offering programs for parents and children. At the beginning, these may build on the traditional library story hours by making them more interactive between parents and their children. Libraries, as they move along the continuum, can strive to incorporate more parent/child interaction in the programs. This interaction might include a craft project or the parent reading a newly-learned children's book. At the upper end of the scale, library staff work more closely with other agencies in program delivery and

dissemination, including teaching other service providers how to conduct their own programs.

Individualized Services

One of the primary goals of family literacy services is to encourage parents to work with their children on reading and reading-related activities. This goal is often carried out by working with parents or other adult caregivers on a one-to-one basis, starting with the more traditional assistance in selecting appropriate books both in terms of the adult's reading ability and the child's interest. As shown in Figure 2.1, this individualized attention can lead to customized learning and reading plans for families. The library also may establish independent learning centers where the adult-child pair can work at their own pace on an activity of choice.

Recruitment/Promotion

As is the case with most special library services, the degree to which a library can design promotion efforts to reach the desired audience is a major determinant in how successful the program is in recruiting participants. At the base of the continuum in this area are the traditional publicity approaches, making use of all available media sources in the area. Beyond this, the library begins to target recruitment and publicity efforts to likely groups and will increase their involvement with other service providers to recruit and inform potential clients about the family literacy services. As the family literacy program evolves, the library increases the number and variety of agencies and organizations it works with in order to enhance promotion efforts.

Summary

As a library begins to plan for family literacy services, librarians can view the conceptual roles and the continuum of involvement in order to understand the range of options available for family literacy efforts. Chapter Three discusses in more detail the specific family literacy activities; this will be helpful when determining strategies of service in the planning process.

3

Family Literacy Activities

Programs of family literacy service follow two themes -- services that center around children's literature and activities that center on parenting skills. Depending on the selected program goals, a variety of activities can be used to promote those goals. This chapter examines goals and activities in each category and suggests key issues to keep in mind with each.

Services that Center Around Children's Literature

The general purposes of these services are to teach parents or other adult caregivers how to use children's literature with children, to model reading behavior, and to encourage reading as a family activity.

The goals of such services vary, depending on the primary needs of the community. Among these goals might be those listed below.

> To create awareness in parents of the importance of reading with children.
>
> To replace the embarrassment of reading children's books with the pride of being able to share special reading time with young children.
>
> To help parents and other adults create a loving relationship between their children and books.
>
> To increase the reading skills of parents through children's literature.
>
> To develop a child's ability to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings through the use of children's literature.

To prepare children for academic success by enhancing their readiness to read.

To increase the amount of reading materials in the home.

Although not a comprehensive list, these are a sampling of the goals of family literacy programs in a variety of settings that center on children's literature.

The kinds of activities to be considered build on the library's expertise in children's literature combined with an understanding of how adults learn. One of the most common activities in family literacy efforts is to actually teach a parent to read selected children's books in order for them to read to their children. While adult literacy programs have tended to stay away from children's books as a teaching tool for adults, in this situation the primary intent is to learn the story to read to children. Since the audience for the reading will be children, the selection of a children's story is appropriate and not condescending to the adult. This is an essential difference in family literacy efforts and should not be seen as a universal approach for all adults learning to read. Instead, this is a useful approach for parents or other adults whose goal it is to help children.

Teaching Children's Literature to Adults

This teaching of a children's book usually is done in an one-on-one situation, although the technique can be modified for a small group effort. A tutor or learning partner first asks the adult to look over the book. As this is done, the learning partner asks the participant about the book; for example, "What is happening?" or "What does the character do in the story?" This discussion serves two purposes: to introduce the book and story to the adult and to show the parent how to work with their children as they begin the story.

The actual teaching of the words takes various forms. One tested method (Laurinburg, NC) is to first have the tutor read the story aloud, with the adult following along. As a follow-up, the parent is queried about the story to help reinforce what the book

is about. The second time, the parent and tutor begin again on the first page and discuss what is happening. The tutor reads the sentence to the student and then the student repeats it. The instructor then goes to the second page and repeats the process, having the adult student repeat it. To reinforce the learning, they go back to the first page and repeat, then to the second page and repeat, and go on to the next page and again repeat the process. Obviously, the number of times needed to repeat is dependent on the reading skill of the parent, how self-explanatory the pictures are, and the complexity of the plot. Flexibility is needed to assure that the process moves at an appropriate pace for the adult student. Finally, the adult reads the entire story aloud. The time it takes to complete this is approximately one hour, although again this is highly dependent on the factors noted above.

While the session helps the adult learn to read the story, it is an equally important outcome to help parents learn how to use the book with their children. Encouraging them to have their children discuss the story and interrupt with questions is part of the learning that goes on in these sessions. Also, a discussion of what to expect from children while listening to the story is needed to help assure that the experience is not frustrating for the adult or the child. For example, depending on the age of the child, they may only want to hear part of the story at a time or want certain parts repeated. In addition, if the child traditionally has not been read to, the act of listening needs to be learned as well. Helping parents set realistic expectations about the child in the process is part of this one-on-one learning experience.

The site for these programs varies. In Laurinburg, North Carolina, the Parent and Child Together (PACT) program used this approach in the library, at Headstart, with tutors and students, and in workplace literacy sites. Because the PACT program is based on this one-on-one approach, it is adaptable to a number of settings and situations. This program can be offered in conjunction with Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs or used as alternative lessons with tutor-student pairs. The key factor is not so much where the program is offered, but rather how it fits the need of the individual. For example,

grandparents are responsive to this program so they can read to their grandchildren.

Appropriate Materials

A critical feature of this type of activity is selecting the appropriate materials. As librarians know, not all children's literature is the same in the style of writing or vocabulary, the quality of the story, or the illustrations. Librarians selecting materials look for repetition of themes in the story, words and sentences that repeat (not necessarily rhyming), pictures that match the text (since visual clues are important), straightforward plot, and potential level of interest for both children and adults. In selecting titles for each adult in the program, other considerations are the person's "frame of reference" or background, e.g., rural or urban, cultural heritage, and the person's reading skills and interests. As the reading skills of the adult improve, so will the number of options for books to be used in the sessions, although it is not so much a computed "reading level" that is the deciding factor on selecting books as much as it is the features described earlier.

Each family literacy program has developed its own list of preferred titles. Listed in Figure 3.1 are some of the most commonly mentioned and can serve as a model for what to look for in other titles. When one author's work is identified as fitting the criteria for the program, it does not necessarily follow that all of the author's items will work as well. Obviously, each item needs to be reviewed individually and in light of the families the program is working with. Also, while familiar stories such as fairy tales are useful, not all versions will be effective. For example, the Galdone version of *The Three Bears* is preferred over more complex versions available. Rhyming books certainly have a repetitious word pattern, but for adults trying to improve their reading aloud, it can be difficult to make a rhyming story sound interesting. This again depends on the individual title and how much it exhibits the other desired features. There is no comprehensive list of books to be used in family literacy efforts, but the bibliography of selection aids in Appendix B can be a good starting point in this selection process.

Telling Stories

Reading stories is of course only one way parents can interact with children and books. Programs that demonstrate how to tell a story from a book help to build the oral skills of the adult and engage children in listening to stories from books. These programs work well one-on-one or in small groups. Just as with learning to read a children's book, participants discuss stories and practice telling the story with the book.

Figure 3.1
Sample Titles for Use in Family Literacy Programs

ANIMAL SOUNDS (Aurelius Battaglia)
OLD HAT, NEW HAT (Stan and Jan Berenstain)
GOODNIGHT MOON (Margaret Wise Brown)
ARE YOU MY MOTHER? (P. D. Eastman)
GO, DOG, GO! (P. D. Eastman)
THE THREE BEARS (Paul Galdone)
CHICK AND DUCKLING (Mirra Ginsburg)
WHERE'S SPOT (Eric Hill)
BROWN BEAR, BROWN BEAR (Bill Martin)
ALL BY MYSELF (Mercer Mayer)
JUST GRANDPA AND ME (Mercer Mayer)
THE TEENY TINY WOMAN (Jane O'Connor)
THE NOISY COUNTING BOOK (Susan Schade and Jon Buller)
NICKY'S NOISY NIGHT (Harriet Ziefert).

Familiar stories, such as folktales or fairy tales, might be the basis for these programs. When working with adults for whom English is a second language, reconsider what would be "familiar" stories. It is interesting, however, how the "themes" in the folktales of other cultural traditions are repeated in Western culture folklore. In selecting titles for storytelling, look for a simple plot, lots of pictures, and a dramatic element.

Be careful when providing instructions to the person doing the demonstration; when instructors who are master storytellers tell their best stories first, parents are less likely to learn from the process. The reverse may happen; they may become convinced that they could "never be that good." Since modeling behavior is part of this learning process, the model has to be seen as within their grasp. Starting with a familiar story or using a story based on a real family experience can help illustrate how parents already have a repertoire of stories to use with their children.

Books-on-Tape

A common motif in family literacy programs is the use of children's books-on-tape. This format has the advantage of being able to be used, after basic instruction, independently by children. More important, however, the parent and child together can use the book and tape as an alternative or additional way to model reading behavior and the enjoyment of reading and listening to stories.

Group programs for parents can introduce the participants to the stories as well as help develop reading skills in the parents. Similar to the one-on-one of the reading programs described above, a books-on-tape learning session will build in repeated use of the book/tape kit. For example, the group leader, after introducing the book, will first read the book, encouraging questions and showing the participants how to encourage children to ask questions about the story. Then, the class reads silently with the tape. Following this, the group reads the story aloud along with the tape. Depending on the desired outcome, e.g., to teach the adults to read the story independent of the tape, the process may continue so that the instructor and participants read the story without the tape together, and then the participants read together without the instructor. While the programs related to the use of books-on-tape vary, the response to the collection seems consistently positive, with high demand for the kits. Libraries also loan tape players, although a number of homes already have tape players available.

Wordless Books

The kinds of literature-based programs that can be developed in family literacy projects are limitless. Other suggestions include a program on using "wordless" books with children that would help parents enhance their skills in encouraging children to use books and express their feelings and ideas in relation to those stories. For an adult who cannot read well, this is an additional way to increase the use of print materials in the home. Families can create their own wordless books using family pictures, postcards, magazine photographs, and drawings. Most families already have a wordless book in their homes -- the family picture album.

A subset of wordless books is baby board books that are especially designed for use with children under one year old. In addition to introducing these types of books to new parents, a program can be designed that emphasizes how to use the books with young children and realistic expectations of young children and books. For example, it is likely that the child will not always hold the book upright or start from the beginning. These programs may be supplemented with board book giveaways as part of the program or through local hospitals.

Interactive Programs

The programs described thus far concentrate on parent-centered programs. In fact, the most effective programs are those that build in an interaction element between the parent and other adult caregivers and the children. One approach is to build on the adult's learning experience with children's literature, either learning to read or tell a story or working with books-on-tape. In this case, the children come to the program with the parents. While the parents are involved in their session, children participate in a separate activity. Near the end of the session, the children and adults meet again so the parents can actually demonstrate their accomplishments immediately by reading or telling the story to the children or working with them on the books-on-tape. This is another chance for the parent to practice while at the same time providing immediate, positive reinforcement of the value of reading with children. This parent-

child interaction element was built in whenever possible in the Laurinburg, North Carolina, program. In Louisville, Kentucky, branch libraries planned a series of Saturday family programs that included reading stories, learning activities, and using books-on-tape. The key feature of these was that parents would work along with the children during the session.

Interactive programs also encompass the family library programs, such as story times, puppet performances, or musical programs. The emphasis in these more traditional library programs is on involving the parent and child together during the program. This may be accomplished by singing, doing finger plays, telling family stories, or working on an activity together, such as drawing or a craft project.

Creating Reading Materials

The active part (or learning activity time) of these programs is valuable for creating reading materials and storytelling aids that can be taken home, helping to increase the amount of reading materials there. Sock puppets can be created for telling stories at home; so can books be made from pictures in magazines or from children's drawings. Family stories are a good vehicle for promoting interaction between the adults and children. For example, the adult can tell a story about the child or about their own childhood. Parents can bring in old photographs as stimulants to this activity. This story can be written down by the parent, by the program coordinator, or learning partner, then illustrated by the children, and put together as a family book. Programs of this type utilize what adult educators call "language experience" and can be a powerful learning tool.

These kinds of programs also can be an effective program with the extended family, such as grandparents and other relatives. A link between family literacy and family history could be a program theme. This theme builds on the family's history and oral tradition. The Bi-Folkal reminiscing multimedia kits that all center on the theme "Remember When ... " can be a catalyst in getting people talking about their family experiences. These kits, while designed for use with the elderly, allow participants to become involved through all the senses -- sight, sound, taste,

smell, and feel. This sensory approach is excellent for involving children.

Imagination is the primary path to various ways to create these materials. Try, for example, taking photos of the family and drawing pictures or using stickers on note cards and inserting them in sealable plastic sandwich bags. Stitch the "pages" together for a personalized book that is also protected from spills and sticky fingers. Other ideas are creating a family reading log using pictures and stickers or making monthly calendars. Library staff can draw from a wide number of resources about children's activities to develop useful learning activities for the family literacy programs.

Collections

Collection development is an integral part of services that center on children's literature. As noted on the continuum for collections in Chapter Two, the existing library collection already has materials suitable for use with family literacy efforts. Following that, as additional formats are introduced -- such as learning toys, puppets, and books-on-tape -- the library will be expanding its collection. These collections may be housed in the library or be on deposit at other locations in the community, such as Headstart, housing projects, or daycare centers.

A specially-designated family reading area may be developed in the library. In Mowhawk Valley Library System in New York State, for example, "family reading centers" were set up in libraries of all sizes. Librarians set apart a small area where children's materials in all formats, educational toys and games, videos on parenting, and parenting books were placed together. As reported in interviews with librarians, the promotion of these centers led to bringing new families into the library and encouraging parents to bring young children. This was especially noticeable in communities serving under 5,000 people.

Library staff may also develop "family kits" that include appropriate level materials of various formats around a certain theme such as "birthdays" or "turtles." Learning activities are also included along with other informational handouts on

children and reading. These can be promoted to grandparents for use when grandchildren visit. For adult new readers, the kits can be used in any of the programs described in this chapter and then be available for circulation.

Other Services

A program related to the library collection is one (or a series) that help adult new readers select materials for their children. This program looks beyond what makes a "good" children's book; it emphasizes selecting books that are appropriate to the age and development of a child and will include discussion of how children use materials at certain ages. While it is hoped that the parents will make use of library materials, the library staff can suggest titles that are inexpensive and readily available. This will help encourage more books in the home and more use of books with children.

This selection assistance, of course, also occurs at the individualized level. For families who prefer an individualized approach, the library may offer assistance in designing a customized reading plan for both parents and children. This entails discussing with parents or caregivers family interests and assessing informally the reading abilities of family members. Specific materials are then selected to fit this family profile.

Finally, a library may choose as an additional activity training of personnel of other agencies. This training covers how to encourage reading in the home and ways to introduce parents to appropriate children's literature. This has the advantage of building the skills of others who are more likely to work directly with at risk families and will aid in referral to the library for other family services. These training sessions help sensitize personnel to the roles of information and literacy in a person's life.

Issues Related to Literature-Based Services

There are some key issues that are related to library family literacy services that center on children's literature. Of primary importance are the materials used for these services. Selection

of appropriate children's materials for both the adult and child is critical to the success of these efforts. Screening materials based on the criteria discussed earlier is an essential first step; over time, the library will be able to draw from a pool of titles appropriate for both learning to read and for storytelling.

A second important reminder is that program organizers cannot assume that using and learning from audiovisuals, such as books-on-tape or puppets, is an automatic skill. Programs that demonstrate effective use helps to teach adults how these can be used to encourage children's interest in reading and listening. Actually learning to read the children's book is important for the parent. As children begin to develop their own reading skills, they will be aware of the difference between telling the story generally and actually reading it. This skill, along with using wordless books and storytelling, is one of the outcomes desired in family literacy efforts.

Since one of the goals is to increase the availability of print materials in the home, often books (usually paperbacks) are given permanently to families that participate. This has been accomplished through grants, gifts, and donations. Also, the programs that help families create their own print materials help achieve this goal. Libraries are in the business of loaning books, so for those interested in family literacy efforts, the issue of book giveaway needs to be addressed.

Services that Center on Parenting Skills

The overall purpose of these programs is to help parents and other adult caregivers enhance their parenting skills, especially those reading-related skills critical to a child's success in school. While improving the adult's reading skills can be an outcome of these efforts, the primary achievement is in the skills of the parent to encourage and model reading behavior in the home.

The goals of such services vary, depending on the sponsors of the program and the ages of the parents and children. Listed on the following page are sample program goals for services that center on parenting skills.

To help parents understand and accept their role as an advocate for their child's learning.

To increase parental skills and knowledge of child development and parenting.

To increase the comfort level of parents with the schools.

To assist families to feel more a part of the school and community.

To improve self-esteem in both the parent and child.

To aid parents in further developing their reading-related parenting skills.

To assist adolescent parents in improving parenting skills.

Parenting Skills

Services for parents parallel those described in the previous section, with both programs and collection development being the two major facets. Program topics relate to a wide variety of parenting concerns, but those centered at the library tend to focus on reading and how to promote reading readiness in preschoolers. These types of programs include some of those that center around children's literature, but also include programs on the developmental skills of children. Special attention is given to reading-related behaviors, but if the program is being planned with cosponsors, it is more likely that the program will take a more general approach to child development.

To encourage participation in parenting programs, services in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area incorporated a "peer parent" element, where parents team up to encourage each other to attend programs and help each other try new things. This may also help to overcome the transportation problems that sometimes occur. Another example of a cooperative program also comes from Minnesota. In a program called "Success by Six," public

health workers, during the parental visits to the well-baby clinics, introduce the importance of reading in the home. The staff uses a packet developed by the local library to teach new parents about the importance of reading and about useful resources. In this case the public health agency is delivering the direct service, but the library contributes expertise related to reading and children's materials.

School Involvement

This type of programming helps parents to become active consumers of public education. Parents are the primary advocates for their children's learning. This suggests that parents need to understand their role as first teachers and, equally important, understand the advocacy role they assume on behalf of their children in school. For educationally disadvantaged adults, schools may be symbols (and sites) associated with frustration, anger, and humiliation. Because of this, special attention is given to offering programs that allow parents to interact with local schools.

These programs promote involvement in the schools and, as a result, tend to draw on the resources of the local school system. School tours and orientations may be arranged, and school personnel serve as resources who may participate in parent discussions. Such programs may be targeted both for parents with preschoolers about to enter school as well as for parents of school-aged children. An example of a cooperative program with schools is to coordinate a volunteer program for parents in at risk families where the parents assist in a variety of school activities, becoming school and classroom aides.

A parenting hotline also might be offered to help parents know what is happening at the school or to get answers to questions about school procedures. In contrast to a homework hotline for students, the parents hotline can be used to give information on what assignments have been given and to explain assignments so parents can help their children. Although further removed from the school connection, a parenting hotline also can be a crisis line for parents. This type of hotline would necessarily require the expertise of other agencies in the community.

For parents desiring to become more involved in their child's schooling, one program can help parents discuss ways to help children in school. Some of these strategies include discussing school events with children and helping children meet deadlines. Research shows that parental involvement in schools helps children to learn more effectively (U.S. Department of Education, 1986).

Teenage Parents

Family literacy efforts may center on working with teenage parents. These programs are usually offered in conjunction with an agency or organization that works with teen parents, such as hospitals, YWCAs, schools, and public health agencies. The programs may be primarily a support group, but topics might include a wide range of parenting issues. These programs also provide an opportunity for parents to observe their own children's behavior and discuss how this behavior can be encouraged or modified. The services described throughout this chapter can be customized to work with teenage parents.

Teenage parents have a particular need to nurture their role as strong advocates for their children's learning. Some will still be enrolled as students in the same system that they need to also understand and work with as parents.

Individualized Services

Individualized opportunities for families to be involved in learning activities can be offered by the library in a variety of ways. At a basic level, libraries can produce handouts on learning activities for use at home. These handouts are most effective if they are developed for specific age groups, describing reasonable expectations for children at that age. Some libraries have created "learning stations" at the library, where a single learning activity and the needed supplies are available for the adult and child to work on together at their own pace. Even for a small library, a single "station" can be established with a revolving activity.

Other Support Services

In an effort to assist adults in their parenting efforts, the library can offer a number of support services. The library may develop informational materials on child development and reading. These would include information on intellectual, social, and emotional development as well as reading-related behaviors. "Welcome Baby" packets may be developed for use at local hospitals that include handouts, reading suggestions, and perhaps a free baby board book. In its reference role, the public library is the information source for community services for families and may create a community resource directory. Identifying and promoting low cost or free family events in the community will assist parents in planning family activities.

The library is often a major provider of these free family activities. A series of family field trips to other community offerings may be sponsored by the library. At Davenport Public Library, Iowa, overnight library camp outs provide a unique opportunity for family interaction. Participants bring sleeping bags, and the library provides music, storytelling, and craft projects as activities. Often, a group project is completed during the event, such as a special banner or display, to be used by the library. For at risk families, an event like this illustrates the enjoyment of reading-related activities and helps to make them feel more comfortable with the library as an institution.

Collections

Collection development plays a role in family literacy programs that center on parenting. The library collection is examined for existing resources on parenting, and further resource material is acquired. These items include books and magazines, as well as pamphlet information and videos on parenting and teaching children to read and enjoy books. The library may create videos of its own programs in order to make them more widely available to the community. "Family reading centers" in New York brought these parenting materials together with the children's materials to create a central location for family information and enjoyment.

Issues Related to Parenting Services

In planning parenting services, it is important to identify resource people with the skills appropriate to the topic, such as child development. Program facilitators and presenters will come from a variety of agencies and specialties, and the library may be the coordinator for identifying these resource people. Given the diversity of parenting issues, it is critical that expertise is available to address this diversity.

Another factor in offering parenting programs is that the programs often become a parent support group. At the same time, the topics of interest will most likely move from the narrower reading-related topics to broader parenting issues. Programs, then, require both the flexibility and the resource people to accommodate this support aspect of the programs.

What's in a Name?

The various names that libraries use for their family literacy programs suggest the range of approaches used by public libraries. These names are listed below to give an indication of the wide variety and may assist libraries starting programs to select or design a program title.

Baby Wise
Beginning with Books
Books for Babies
Early Childhood Resource Center
Families in Reading
Family Literacy Center
Family Reading Center
Family Sharing Room
Family Support Center
Kids Who Read Succeed
Lap Learners
Lapsit
Library Family Center
More Books in the Home
My Library Loves Me

Parent and Child Education
Parent and Child Together
Parent-Child Learning Center
Parent to Parent
Parents and Tots: If you read now, they will later
Parents as Teachers
Play and Learn Center
Readers as Leaders
Reading Begins at Home
Reading is the Family
Reading is Sharing
Reading Together
Success by Six
Toddler/Parent Workshop
Together

Summary

For a given library family literacy program, it is likely that activities from both the children's literature category and the parent-centered category will be used. The critical issue is really to assure that the program helps contribute to breaking the illiteracy cycle by working not just with adults or just with children. The activities presented here allow for a blend of approaches that can create a service that is family centered.

While some of the techniques are particularly designed for working with adult new readers and their families, many of these activities have a more universal appeal to families and parents in general. The key in family literacy programs as defined for this book, however, is active recruitment of the audience desired rather than simple marketing of the services to the general public. This will not exclude participation of all the library's potential clientele, but it will assure that a special effort is made to attract the at risk families to the program. For group programs such as family story times or services like books-on-tape, this special effort in recruitment is needed to assure that the audience goes beyond the library's traditional users.

4

Planning Family Literacy Programs

Planning family literacy programs follows the same basic process as planning for any library service. This process includes needs assessment, setting program goals and objectives, selection of appropriate service strategies, and evaluation. This chapter offers a review of this process and a brief discussion of funding.

Needs Assessment

Decisions regarding the kind of services to offer are based on an assessment of needs for a given community. To assume that every community requires the same kind of family literacy program ignores the unique features and characteristics of that community. For family literacy programs, information on the need for the services as well as on existing services is critical to planning. Specifically, information on the literacy situation in the community is gathered, using sources such as the U.S. Census, local municipal and school reports, statements issued by educational agencies in the community, and local press coverage of the problem. School plans and reports can be an excellent source about the need for work with preschoolers and their parents and for information about teenage parents.

Identifying the agencies involved in literacy and families is an essential part of the needs assessment process. By locating and describing these agencies, the library has a clearer picture of the range of literacy services as well as assistance available for families in the community. An understanding of what services are currently available becomes the baseline for comparison for the library -- what is currently being offered in comparison to what is needed. In order for the library to select an appropriate role in family literacy, this community profile with regard to family literacy is indispensable in the planning process.

While identifying these agencies, the library also can gather information about the extent of the problem. As organizations are contacted for information, queries can be made about the need for literacy services and for family literacy services in particular. This helps the library accomplish the first needs assessment step of determining the extent and nature of the problem. Many agencies conduct their own needs assessments; the library may use information from these studies. In a cooperative scenario, the library might also add selected questions to surveys being done by these other groups. In either case, the library saves time when it is able to use existing sources of information.

There are other advantages of this stage of the community analysis. As the library staff become acquainted with personnel in local agencies and organizations, the library begins to become part of the family services and literacy network in the area. This step also begins to build interest in and support for the library's efforts in family literacy. If proposals for outside funding are prepared, these initial contacts can lead to support through participation in advisory committees or letters endorsing the project. In the long run, the contacts established in this early needs assessment step are prerequisites to conducting effective family literacy programs. As discussed in Chapter Five under recruitment, cooperation with other agencies is a common characteristic of family literacy programs.

A study of the library itself is part of this needs assessment process. Basically, the library needs to know what assets it currently has to contribute to the family literacy efforts in terms of materials, personnel, and resources. For example, does the library have materials that are appropriate for a family literacy program? What is the staff expertise in children's, outreach, and adult services that can be used in the family literacy program? Are similar services being offered that family literacy services can build on? What monetary resources are available to the library for use in its family literacy effort? Does the library have volunteers who can assist with family literacy programs? These are a sampling of questions the library uses to look inward when embarking on family literacy planning. This information provides insight into the library's strengths and weaknesses as

it develops strategies for offering family literacy activities. This step in the process also provides the library the opportunity to explore staff attitudes toward involvement in literacy.

Determining Goals and Objectives

In Chapter Three, sample goals for family literacy programs are introduced. In the planning process, the program goals create a direction for the program. Following the needs assessment process, a library develops these goals in relation to the unmet needs identified in the community. For example, will the program focus on serving teenage parents and their families or will it center on promoting family activities in the library? The critical question at this point in the planning is "What does the library want to accomplish with its family literacy program?"

Once these program goals have been developed, the planners consider more specific objectives that can be used to assess the impact of the family literacy efforts. In order to assess change, these objectives need to detail a specific outcome. An objective should address a single accomplishment, be measurable or verifiable (yes/no), and have a time element. For example, in a program that aids adolescent parents, some objectives might be:

> To gather information on 25 agencies and organizations that work with adolescent parents by June 1, 1991.
>
> To recruit at least ten (10) families to participate in the library family literacy project by October 1, 1991.
>
> To maintain participation of 80% of the families recruited by the end of the program in March 1992.
>
> To provide ten (10) books for the home for each family participating in the family literacy program by March 1992.
>
> To have adolescent parents learn to read on the average five children's books by March 1992.

The need to write clear program objectives can be related to a road map. If you cannot tell where you are going, how will you know what roads to take or if you ever arrive at the desired place? For planning, these objectives specifically detail the place -- where the library is going with its family literacy program. The strategies or activities are the roads -- how you will get to the place or desired outcomes. Finally, the objectives, by specifying where the program is going, help provide the answer to the question "are we there yet?" Answering this question equates to the evaluation stage of the planning process.

A final word on goals and objectives. As the family literacy program evolves, so will the goals and objectives for the project. The process of trying to create the perfectly written goals and objectives should not become a stumbling block in the planning process. The style and precision of the objectives will be refined over time as the program itself takes form. The critical need is to put in writing some sense of direction for the program. Only by describing where the family literacy program is going can the library evaluate its progress. The setting of these directions as well as evaluation of the results will gradually improve as the program continues to grow, but they must be articulated at the start.

Developing Strategies

This step in the process is deciding what activities should be conducted to help achieve the objectives set in the previous step. This is the "how" part of the plan. Chapters Two and Three of this manual provide an array of service strategies that might be used. These chapters, of course, do not provide a comprehensive list of options, but can be a starting place for developing appropriate services. In developing these strategies, the information gathered in the needs assessment step is useful, since the library has an awareness of what service options currently exist and what resources the library has to contribute to family literacy efforts.

It is the strategies portion of the plan that translates most clearly into the budget, or what resources are required to carry out each

activity. Many of the activities described earlier in this manual can be conducted using existing personnel and collections. Others will require seeking additional personnel, either through volunteers or additional staff. In terms of materials, as new formats are introduced or additional titles needed, the library may choose to request these funds from the city council or village board, seek grant funding, or solicit donations. At the time when services are designed, the costs of these services are more definitive. It is in this stage of the design that involvement by administrators is critical, although information about the need for family literacy services must be communicated early in the process.

The availability of resources affects the implementation of the plan. For example, if ten activities are desired, the library may need to start with only three of these in the first year of the plan, and then add five more the following year and the final two activities in the third year. This long-range planning allows a library to get started with its family literacy efforts while at the same time being able to project the resources needed to carry on the project in future years.

For libraries that have designed family literacy activities, a common characteristic is cooperation with other agencies and organizations. As noted in the needs assessment section, the contacts made with these groups when gathering information can lead to cooperative delivery of family literacy services. Especially in the area of recruitment, collaborative efforts are critical to reach the targeted group. Chapter Five provides a further discussion of cooperation in recruitment.

Evaluation

Evaluation of family literacy programs occurs at two stages: while conducting the program and at the end of the planning cycle. The first, called formative evaluation, is the monitoring process that occurs while the program is being offered. Taking benchmark or progress measures (related to the objectives set) and assessing progress on the project activities are ways to monitor progress toward the project's objectives. The advantage

of this monitoring is that the project can be adjusted as needed if progress seems unsatisfactory or behind schedule. This type of evaluation helps to keep the program on track and allows for adjustment of strategies and resources as needed during the program.

In contrast, evaluation conducted at the end of the planning cycle, known as summative evaluation, is the step that assesses if the library accomplished what was desired. If the objectives are clearly stated at the beginning of the planning cycle, this is relatively easy to determine. The question would be, "Did we accomplish the levels established in the objectives?" Using, for example, the sample objectives in this chapter, this would translate into, "Did the library contact 25 agencies, recruit at least ten families, retain at least eight families in the program, provide at least ten books per family, and teach parents at least five stories?"

In this step of the evaluation, then, the library has measured progress toward meeting program objectives. But that is only one step in the evaluation process. Next, the library has to decide what these outcomes mean. If the library recruited only five families, does this suggest reducing the level set next year in the objectives or does it mean further work is needed in planning recruitment activities? Providing meaning for these outcomes is the step that helps the library decide what changes to make in the program the next year. At this step, the library may also decide that the measures chosen did not adequately assess the program's outcomes or desired accomplishments.

The Planning Cycle

Planning is cyclical in that as one stage is completed, it feeds into the next step. For example, the information gathered during the evaluation stage becomes part of the needs assessment and affects the revision of the goals and objectives of the process. Because of the cyclical nature of the planning process, a library can begin planning at any stage, although it is recommended that a library includes the critical goals and objectives step in each planning cycle. Developing a plan is not a perfect process,

so each cycle should be viewed as an opportunity for the library to refine and further develop the family literacy plan.

Funding

The sources of funding for family literacy programs range from individual donations to federal grants. As with any service program in the library, the potential for funding is driven by the library's ability to illustrate to potential funders why the family literacy program will help the funders achieve their goals as well support family literacy efforts. There is no limit to possible funders, but the library will have to understand the funders' needs along with the library's needs. Making the case for the match between the funder and the library is the "art" of fundraising.

Nationally, Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title VI funds are available for library literacy projects; some family literacy projects have been funded under this Title, but careful attention must be paid to assuring that the focus of these projects are adult new readers, not children. Family literacy projects also are being funded through LSCA Title I, which is administered through state library agencies. In addition to government funding, foundations throughout the country are becoming more interested in literacy, as are an increasing number of corporate donors. Several published sources list foundations and corporate givers. For most states, a directory of in-state foundations is available. These may be the most logical sources for family literacy funds since many have an interest in funding local or in-state projects.

In addition to these sources, libraries have turned to local organizations and businesses for support for the program. One organization may provide a cash grant to fund program speakers or materials, while others may provide volunteers or assistance in publicizing the project. Businesses in particular have been a good source for donations of giveaways as program incentives, such as books and gift certificates. Many libraries find that they are piecing together funding for family literacy efforts from a variety of sources rather than one large funder.

Collaboration also has a role in fundraising. For example, by teaming up with another agency, the library may tap into funding sources available to only a certain type of agency, such as social services or the public schools. Also, evidence of cooperation is seen as a positive feature of funding proposals. This shows funders that you are aware of community efforts and not operating in a vacuum. There is a feeling that the money will be more effectively used if several agencies are cooperating. A third way in which cooperation affects funding is in the pooling of resources. Each agency can contribute certain in-kind services to a joint project, such as printing, staff expertise, transportation, or meeting space.

Existing library resources are a logical source for family literacy services. If the library intends to offer these services as a regular part of the library's services, then some commitment in local funds (i.e., the library's operating budget) is required. It may be that the family literacy program may take precedence over services previously offered, being given a priority in the library's plan of service. Friends groups are an excellent additional source of funding and support for these services. As noted in earlier chapters, however, there are a number of family literacy activities that do not carry a large price tag in terms of additional materials or staff. The library's family literacy effort may not be a separate "program"; instead, efforts may involve single activities already being offered in the library. As such, these activities do not need additional funding except for special marketing of the services to the targeted populations.

Finally, consider the appeal that the idea of family literacy might have for funders. The concept of family literacy -- that is helping families -- is a widely supported issue. Nationwide concern over the future of the family makes the case for funding these programs a strong one. Funding sources are drawn to projects that respond to important societal values, such as education and families. Other compelling themes that can be used are: the connection of literacy and employability; the importance of family cohesion; and bringing youth and books together. While seeking ongoing funding for programs is always difficult, the current appeal of family-centered programs should help (and should be used by) the library seeking funding for family literacy efforts.

Summary

Careful planning is the basis for developing and continuing family literacy programs. Libraries need to consider all the steps of the planning cycle -- needs assessment, determining goals and objectives, developing strategies, and evaluation -- as essential to insuring viable family literacy programs and an institutional commitment to these programs. Local funding is one indicator of that institutional commitment to family literacy, although libraries will draw on many alternative funding sources to build these programs. Chapter Five discusses issues that will affect the planning for family literacy efforts.

5

Issues Related to Offering Family Literacy Programs

Two key issues need to be considered when planning family literacy programs: recruitment and retention. When trying to reach out to a group that may not be traditional library users or have a negative or cautious view toward institutionalized services, such as school, the ability to recruit people to participate in the program is a major challenge. Likewise, because of other concerns in their life such as possible transportation, work-related, or health problems, an extra effort needs to be made to keep the families involved in the programs.

Recruitment

The effort needed to recruit participants parallels the difficulties that adult literacy programs encounter. Illiterate people may have a natural anxiety and anger about institutions, including libraries. This means the invitation for participation needs to be empathetic to this anxiety. Since illiteracy is seen as a stigma, there is a critical need for sensitivity in publicizing programs.

Most publicity has a tendency to be highly dependent on print which may not be the most appropriate approach to use with a group that is characterized by reading difficulties. In reality, however, creating print publicity pieces, designed and written with the target group in mind, are part of the recruitment/publicity campaigns for family literacy efforts. These also are useful for reaching other adults who may know or work with at risk families.

The key to using print media is in its distribution. Newspaper stories and direct mailings are especially useful for reaching adults who may be in a position to refer clients to the library's program. For direct appeal to adult new readers, distribution of the print materials is combined with a personal contact for the

most effective approach. For example, recruitment stations in shopping areas allow staff to discuss the family program while distributing print materials. Recruitment stations can be in a wide variety of places, such as Headstart; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs; local fairs; public school registrations; and public health clinics.

Reaching the potential clients for family literacy programs is often done indirectly, i.e., through a contact with another service provider. Use of an intermediary agency or person to encourage participation widens the library's effort to contact people personally. The key to this, of course, is making sure that those agencies and their staff are aware of the program, understand the program, and most important, support the program. The level of commitment to promoting the library's family literacy program relates to the level of involvement that agency or person had in planning the program. This goes back to that essential element of family literacy efforts, in other words cooperation. The more agencies the library works with or keeps informed of the process, the easier the promotional and recruitment aspects become.

Each community, of course, will differ in the types of agencies and organizations that may be potential partners in its family literacy efforts. Any organization that has an interest in families or education are likely choices, especially for possible funding. When thinking of which organizations to tap for referral to the library program, candidates include those that work with families, literacy, and children or those that serve a diverse client group. Listed below are organizations that libraries and other literacy providers have worked with when providing and promoting family literacy services.

County health department, including visiting nurses and clinics

Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program

Adult Basic Education and GED programs, usually through the public schools or the local community colleges

Volunteer literacy councils, such as those affiliated with Laubach Literacy International or Literacy Volunteers of America
Programs working with the homeless, including shelters and special educational programs for children of the homeless
Headstart
Food stamp office
Job, Training, Partnership Act (JTPA) programs
Juvenile justice
Foster grandparent groups
Community, Coordinated Child Care
Child caregivers, especially those that serve targeted neighborhoods
Medical facilities
Teen parent groups or programs in the schools
Worker's compensation office
Social service agencies
Unemployment office
Unions
County extension office
Churches
Schools
Workplace literacy programs
Retired Seniors Volunteer Program

Use of an audiovisual presentation also can be an effective recruitment approach. A slide-tape or video tape of program participants can be used to attract interest at recruiting stations or when giving presentations. Use of non-print media, such as television or radio, has the advantage of reaching a large number of people. The major difficulty here is producing a professional looking piece (in the case of television) or effective radio announcements. Some local media will assist in this process, but libraries have worked with local advertising organizations, community theatre groups, and community college media labs to produce publicity; funding from local organizations may be used to have the work done professionally. Collaboration seems to be the key to using non-print media. In media markets that serve several library agencies, a coordinated approach for the entire group has the potential to increase exposure of library

programs. Also, since most family literacy programs cooperate with other agencies, these agencies may be able to combine their resources with the library's to create a community-wide media campaign. Another way to receive coverage is to be a guest on local radio or television shows (especially cable) or to encourage news coverage of events in the family literacy program. By becoming news, the library can gain the attention of the media.

There is no single best way to recruit people for family literacy programs. Libraries report trying any approach that seems reasonable and taking advantage of any opportunity to publicize the project. Program organizers emphasize the need to talk with as many people as possible. A good rule of thumb is to promote the family literacy services wherever people wait -- in lines, in offices, and for transportation -- by using multimedia approaches. As noted above, the personal touch is needed either directly by the library or through the use of intermediaries. Some programs do home visits or recruitment door-to-door in selected neighborhoods. Others try to have a high-impact event to draw attention to the program by both the media and possible participants. Consider tying into national themes such as Children and Hospital Week (March), the Week of the Young Child (April), National Library Week (April), National Literacy Day (September), or Children's Book Week (November).

The suggestions here certainly are not unique to family literacy programs. Libraries necessarily build on existing publicity, media contacts, and networks of cooperative agencies. What is different, though, is the need for a more personalized approach to the publicity, using whenever possible other resources in the community to make those personal connections.

Finally, library staff need to have a realistic view of recruitment goals. Building an audience for family literacy efforts takes time, and as illustrated above, a great deal of effort. For children's librarians, who probably have an excellent track record of attendance at children's programs, a readjustment of anticipated program participation is needed. Among family literacy programs examined, average attendance of three to five families per session was considered successful. In all cases, the libraries had set a much higher goal initially for their programs. Also,

word-of-mouth is a critical recruitment strategy. To generate positive word-of-mouth takes time; the programs are progressive, building on each year's efforts. Given the interactive nature of most family literacy projects, a smaller number of participants per session leads to more individualized attention. There is not a magic formula for the "right" number of participants; however, objectives, especially during the first year of the program, need to reflect realistic levels of participation.

Retention

Maintaining involvement of participants in the program is a second common concern raised by libraries offering family literacy services. The more "at risk" families are, the more important it is to consider factors that affect retention. The profile of the adult new reader or an at risk family suggests that other problems may be present, such as unemployment, health concerns, transportation difficulties, and fear of schools. Staff involved in family literacy programs need to understand how difficult it is to maintain the initiative to be involved once recruited to the program.

What, then, are factors that affect retention? First, a child who is excited about a program may serve as an incentive for the parent to return. This suggests careful attention to designing a program that intrigues both the child and the parent or caregiver. If the program is one that is designed for adult involvement only, libraries have found that offering simultaneous children's activities or child care relieves the problem adults may have with locating child care before attending the program.

Family literacy programs are holistic in their approach, but it is the adult who makes the decision for the family to attend. Keeping the goals of the parent or caregiver at the forefront of the program is a factor in keeping them involved. For example, if a major goal of the parent is to read to their children, reading a simple story becomes the key objective of the program. Related to this is the need to build in success at each stage of the program to encourage repeat attendance. Self-contained, one-

session programs with a tangible result will help assure continued participation.

The type of program also affects participation. In addition to understanding the adult's goals, programs that provide models for parents are popular. Models include not only teachers, government officials, and managers, but people working in all sorts of jobs in the community -- in the grocery store, at the fire station, or with the local garage. Diversity in the people involved in offering the program can encourage continued participation.

Another concern is the nature of the relationships in the program. A more "social" relationship between parents or caregivers and the project staff leads to a more informal and, as a result, perhaps less threatening atmosphere for participants. The participants develop a sense of comraderie that encourages continued attendance if the program allows for interaction between parents.

Flexibility in program design may help the most to encourage return visits. As noted above, a self-contained program means that one absence will not totally put the family "off track." Flexibility also means keeping the parents' goals in mind, even within the program structure. Flexibility should not be interpreted as lack of concern for attendance, however. Concern needs to be shown for absences with follow-up calls, notes, or home visits. Another feature of being flexible is bringing the program to another location, at least initially, to build interest in the program.

Tangible incentives are used by libraries offering family literacy programs. The most frequently mentioned are children's books to be kept by the family, along with magazines and books-on-tape. Sometimes incentives are based on percentage of attendance, i.e., a book for every two attendances. There are many incentives used besides print materials. Restaurant coupons (for meals, not percentage off), haircut certificates, and grocery store checks are a sample of the kind of donated incentives used in family literacy programs. Transportation is a common problem, so some programs provide taxi fare or bus tokens. In conjunction with other agencies, such as the schools

or Headstart, some programs try to provide direct transportation to the program. Child care and refreshments also are provided. There is not a perfect incentive to use; a range of options increases the chance of finding one that will appeal to each participant. Other programs depend on things made in the program to be incentives -- books made by the family, photos of the family, or puppets created during the program.

When evaluating the family literacy program, special attention needs to be paid to retention efforts. Along with recruitment, this may be a logical area for improvement in the project. There is a relationship between recruitment and retention. The same ideas that affect retention also can be seen as recruitment aids.

Other Concerns

In addition to the critical issues of recruitment and retention, other issues are reported by libraries involved in family literacy efforts. In planning and carrying out family literacy projects in a variety of settings, planners will want to consider these concerns both in the planning stage and in evaluating and adjusting program efforts.

In program design, it is critical to keep the parents or caregivers' goals at the forefront. This suggests that family literacy programs start with adults and then bring in the children, rather than be totally child-centered. Parents who are involved do want to help their children, but it does not necessarily mean that they immediately recognize or have the desire to improve their own reading skills. Involving potential participants in the planning will help assure that their objectives are considered in the program.

Because family literacy programs are a more holistic approach to family concerns, planners must bring together expertise in youth services and adult services. This means knowing children and their development as well as parenting and adult learning. What this suggests is a team or cooperative approach to planning family literacy programs using a composite of skills from a variety of agencies rather than those of one person. A

side benefit of this is that more local agencies and organizations will understand and, hopefully, support the family literacy program.

It is important to recognize that for any activity, the participants will bring a range of reading skills. Some will have no or limited reading skills, some will have minimal reading skills, and so on. As a result, this implies that a mix of recruitment strategies, retention techniques, and levels of program activities is needed in response to these varied skills. Program providers need to be sensitive to this variety and consider ways to assess participants' reading skills without formal testing.
Program designs that build in repetition will most likely have the most long-term effects. Family literacy programs attempt to change behavior and so must use a variety of approaches to reach the intended audience. The project needs to be cumulative in order to contribute to learning new behaviors. Changing behavior that is an established pattern takes repeated exposure to the new approach. If reading has not been a regular activity, incorporating it into a family's lifestyle will take time and repeated exposure to ways to accomplish this.

To date, family literacy programs have focused primarily on working with families with preschool children. Attention needs to be given to incorporating activities for elementary school children and adolescents. Programs that center on parenting will logically begin working with parents on how to work with the school system to help their children succeed in school.

An unanswered question about family literacy programs is "What happens when the program is successful?" If a family participates in a program series, what is the next step? Can the program be repeated? What other options are open to the family? Will the parent or caregiver move to other adult literacy programs? As family literacy efforts become more developed in libraries, efforts to assure continued support for families need to be made. Is it enough to just say "you can continue to come to the library for books"? The difficulty of changing behavior suggests a more interactive follow-up with families who have been successful in the family literacy project.

Flexibility is a characteristic critical to these programs. Flexibility in program design is needed for retention, but libraries also need to view the process of developing and refining family literacy programs as flexible as well. There is not one perfect family literacy program for every library. The nature of a given program should reflect the nature of the community and the library. Understanding that nature helps assure that the community has a family literacy program that fits the needs of its residents rather than a textbook solution to literacy problems.

Change is a major theme in family literacy programs, primarily change in participants. There is an equally important and parallel change in library staff who are involved in these programs. One outcome of involvement in family literacy should be staff who are more sensitive to clients. This is accompanied by increased ability to fit the right books to the interests of the family. Librarians often develop a better appreciation for the library collection and enhanced understanding of how to use the collection to match the varying needs and skill levels of patrons.

Finally, there is the consistent theme of cooperation. By this point, most readers will have seen the numerous ways in which cooperation is useful for library family literacy programs. For example, it aids in recruitment and brings the variety of expertise needed to offer the program. A common feature of library family literacy programs, cooperation may require compromises. It does not necessarily make program development easier, but it does make the end result better. Building that critical cooperative network is among the first efforts needed to carry out a family literacy program.

Conclusion

Family literacy programs attempt to break the cycle of illiteracy. Using a variety of strategies, libraries and other agencies are taking a more holistic approach to literacy by working with the family unit rather than just the adult or the child. Programs are being offered by individual libraries, but currently family literacy services are still evolving in this field. This manual provides guidelines for further evolution of family literacy services.

During this process of development, new ideas and strategies will be introduced. Libraries need to continue to share these advancements.

Family literacy services build on the strengths of existing library services. Libraries, as a community agency, have the opportunity to make a change in the communities they serve by becoming involved in local family literacy efforts. By building on the library's strengths and collaborating with other community groups, a library can design and carry out an effective family literacy program. This suggests a future where libraries offer services for *all* the families in their communities, regardless of their reading skills.

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